



Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

Michael S. Steele
Lt. Governor

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman

Calvin W. Burnett
Acting Secretary

MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AID TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and Economic Development

February 11, 2004

Secretary's response to recommended action

1. Add budget language to reduce funds in the Senator John A. Cade formula contingent upon passage of budget reconciliation languages.

The Commission concurs with the analyst's recommendation.

Secretary's comments to issues raised in the Department of Legislative Services Analysis

2. Recommendation that the Commission include the dropout rate of community college students in its MFR submission.

The use of the term "dropout" to describe new full-time students at community colleges who do not transfer to a public four-year campus or earn a credential is misleading for two reasons. First, while retention, transfer and graduation rates provide important measures of success at community colleges; two-year institutions have expanded their missions in recent years and are enrolling increasing numbers of students with other educational goals. These include taking individual courses to prepare for entry into a career, upgrading skills for one's current job, or enrolling in classes for the purpose of self-enrichment. The Commission has convened a workgroup with the community colleges for the purpose of developing a mechanism for the reporting of entry goals and adding it to the agency's enrollment information system. This effort will allow the Commission to identify the number of students who matriculate with goals other than transfer and degree attainment. Second, the Commission is currently unable to track students who transfer from a community college to a Maryland independent institution or to an out-of-state campus and, therefore, cannot distinguish between these individuals and those who are no longer enrolled in higher education.



3. Request that the Commission explain its elimination of certain goals and performance measures in the Cade Formula section of its MFR submission.

The guidelines issued by the Department of Budget and Management for the latest MFR cycle directed State agencies to limit the number of program goals to two, with two objectives (and corresponding performance measures) per goal. The Commission eliminated the goals and most of the performance measures cited to comply with DBM's requirement. The Commission dropped the objective and performance measure dealing with transfer and graduation rates of ESOL students because these were not appropriate indicators to gauge success in this program. The Commission has convened a community college workgroup and identified a performance measure to assess the progress of ESOL students, which will be included in its next MFR submission.